

**Revised Operating Guidance for Internal
Quality Assurance Cells (IQACs) of
Institutes/Faculties/Units of
University of Sri Jayewardenepura**

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1. Introduction

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is the process through which measures are established within a university to ensure that the education provision and the standard of awards made in the name of the academic programmes are maintained and improved to fulfil the expectations of its stakeholders. For this purpose, every university needs to establish a Centre for Quality Assurance (CQA) at the university level as per the Circular No. 09/2019 on 'Further Strengthening Internal Quality Assurance Systems in Universities and Higher Educational Institutes' and each institute/faculty/unit involved in offering academic programmes of a university should establish an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) to oversee its IQA activities under the guidance and collaboration of the CQA.

In this context, this document outlines the underlying principles, and the composition, functions and reporting requirements of an IQAC established in the institutes/faculties/units of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJ) with the objective of serving as a guideline for the operation of an IQAC. This document has been developed in compliance with the quality assurance (QA) policy manual and the QA By-Law of USJ.

2. General Principles

The IQAC of an institute/faculty/unit should operate based on the following broad principles:

- Adoption of a holistic approach and integration of academic, academic support and administrative activities of the institute/faculty/unit to ensure the fulfilment of the required academic and professional standards.
- Recognition and appreciation of the diversity of disciplines and/or subject areas offered by the institute/faculty/unit.
- Promotion of open-minded discussions among the academic, academic support and administrative staff, and the students to enhance the confidence in QA and create team spirit in carrying out QA activities.
- Relying on multiple methods and perspectives to improve quality, thus diversity within the institute/faculty/unit is not affected.
- Adoption of an evidence-based approach to QA with a focus on continuous improvement of academic and administrative activities of the institute/faculty/unit.

3. Composition

Each institute/faculty/unit can decide the composition of the IQAC based on its structure and the nature of the academic programmes conducted and also in compliance with Section 3.2 of USJ QA By-Law. This cell should be represented by a member from each department of study/unit/board of study of an institute/faculty/unit. Considering the type of activity that should be undertaken by an IQAC, it is recommended to appoint a responsible senior member from each department of study/unit/board of study to oversee and guide its QA activities. One member of the IQAC should be appointed as its Coordinator at the Faculty Board/Management Board on the consensus of the membership by taking into account his/her seniority and experience in QA related matters. When the Coordinator is appointed, it should be informed to the CQA to issue the letter of appointment, which includes the terms of reference (TOR) for the IQAC Coordinator. This TOR is provided in Annex I of this document. The appointment is made for a period of three years. The period of appointment can be extended to another term by following the procedure mentioned above.

4. Functions

The IQAC is responsible for developing the policies and guidelines relating to the QA activities of an institute/faculty/unit and overseeing the implementation of such activities. These activities should revolve around the following aspects relating to the institute/faculty/unit.

- (i). Management and review of study programmes
- (ii). Development of human and physical resources
- (iii). Design and development of the curriculum of study programmes
- (iv). Design and development of courses/modules
- (v). Improvement of teaching and learning mechanisms
- (vi). Provision of student support services and facilitating their progression
- (vii). Review of student assessment mechanism and awards relating to study programmes
- (viii). Promotion of innovative and healthy practices in relation to aspects (i) to (vii)

However, the institute/faculty/unit can expand or modify the scope of the activities performed by the IQAC considering its structure and the nature of the academic programme offered. Hence, it is recommended that a TOR to be prepared for the IQAC of each institute/faculty/unit stating its

functions, authority and responsibilities. This TOR should be prepared by the relevant institute/faculty/unit and approved by the faculty board/management board and the University Senate. A copy of the approved TOR of the IQAC should be sent to the CQA for recording purposes.

IQAC should refer to the following programme review manuals for undergraduate study programmes/postgraduate study programmes/external degree programmes issued by the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) of the University Grants Commission (UGC) as appropriate in the conduct of its activities.

- Manual for Review of Undergraduate Study Programmes of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutes
- Manual for Review of Postgraduate Programmes of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutes
- Manual for Quality Assurance of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses

These documents provide the best practices to be followed in QA activities in relation to above-mentioned aspects for which IQAC is responsible for.

Further, the IQAC should ensure that the study programmes offered by the relevant institute/faculty/unit are in compliance with the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF), the relevant subject benchmark statements (SBSs) issued by the QAC of UGC, and relevant professional/accreditation standards (if applicable).

It is also recommended that the IQACs to conduct periodic reviews of the progress made as to QA activities of all study programmes conducted by the respective institute/faculty/unit in consultation with the CQA.

5. Reporting

The IQAC is required to monthly report to the relevant faculty board/management board and thereby to the University Senate regarding the progress of its activities in relation to the eight aspects stated in Section 4. The IQAC could report either on all these aspects or on selected aspects based on the manner in which they have been carried out in the respective institute/faculty/unit.

Further, it is proposed to use a reporting format similar to the one given in the Annex II in this respect. A copy of the progress report of IQAC should be sent to the CQA on monthly basis to keep it aware of the developments taking place at the respective institute/faculty/unit as to QA matters. Further, IQAC should create a webpage to showcase its activities on the website of the relevant institute/faculty/unit.

6. Conclusion

IQA of an institute/faculty/unit is a continuous activity. It should ensure that academic standards in education, research, community services and consultancy are safeguarded, enhanced and effectively managed. The mechanism established in this respect in an institute/faculty/unit is the IQAC. Hence, each institute/faculty/unit should assume the responsibility for the proper functioning of its IQAC within the broad guidelines set out in this document.

7. Review and Approval

The CQA of USJ has the right to periodically revise this Operating Guidance to suit the changes in the national level QA policies and procedures developed by the QAC of UGC. Thereafter, the approval of the Senate and the Council of the USJ is obtained for this document. The revised Operating Guidance is effective from the date it is approved by the Council and it will supersede the document existed till then.

Annex I
TOR of IQAC Coordinator

- Liaise regularly and closely with the Director of the Institute/Dean of the Faculty/Director of the Unit, Director/CQA and Deputy Director/CQA to ensure the smooth functioning of the IQAC
- Coordinate all QA related activities within the Institute/Faculty/Unit and report monthly to the Faculty Board/Management Board
- Assist the Director of the Institute/Dean of the Faculty/Director of the Unit, Director/CQA and Deputy Director/CQA to implement QA Reviews/Audits and follow-up action
- Coordinate the preparation of the Institute/Faculty/Unit Self Evaluation Report, Programme or Subject Review Reports etc., where necessary and applicable
- Prepare an Annual Work Plan for the IQAC of the Institute/Faculty/Unit and a Strategic Development Plan for QA activities for three years for the Institute/Faculty/Unit
- Provide advice on QA matters to all departments, divisions or sections under the Institute/Faculty/Unit
- Assist the Director/CQA and Deputy Director/CQA to incorporate the QA aspects in the University Corporate Plan
- Facilitate the identification and sharing of good practices between academic departments, divisions or sections under the Institute/Faculty/Unit
- Assist the preparation of QA related guidelines and manuals for use within the Institute/Faculty/Unit
- Ensure the necessary academic regulations/By-Laws are in place, within the Institute/Faculty/Unit and if not, make recommendations for remedial action
- Conduct the Institute/Faculty/Unit Level Awareness Programs on QA, among staff members, with the support of CQA
- Assist the administration of student surveys/feedback, stakeholder meeting proceedings and other surveys, and maintain a repository of evidence at Institute/Faculty/Unit level
- Conduct period reviews to assess the progress of QA activities relating to the academic programmes conducted by the Institute/Faculty/Unit
- Ensure that the webpage of IQAC of the Institute/Faculty/Unit is maintained up-to-date

Annex II

This is only a guide. IQAC can devise its own format to report the progress as to its functions specified in Section 4 of this document.

Report of IQAC

Institute/Faculty/Unit -----
(Indicate appropriately)

Month -----

Year -----

Aspect <i>(You can select the relevant activities for a month based on these aspects in Section 4)</i>	Current Activities	Targets /Proposals	Best Practices (if any)
Management and review of study programs			
Development of human and physical resources			
Design and development of the curriculum of study programs			
Design and development of courses/modules			
Improvement of teaching and learning mechanisms			
Provision of student support services and facilitating their progression			
Review of student assessment mechanism and awards relating to study programs			
Promotion of innovative and healthy practices in relation to the aspects mentioned above			

Signed by

Coordinator, IQAC

Approved by

Director, Institute/Dean, Faculty/Director, Unit *(Select the appropriate designation)*